

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method of verifying a right to use an element of a web page hosted by a
2 web server, the method comprising the steps of:

3 responsive to a request from a client for a web page hosted by a web server,
4 storing an indicator that said client has requested a web page hosted by said web
5 server;

6 responsive to a request from a client for an element of a web page, checking for
7 said indicator that said client has requested a web page from said web server; and

8 responding to the request from the client for said element of a web page hosted
9 by the web server according to the result of said checking step.

10 2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said storing step comprises
11 returning to the client a persistent client state object having an identifier therein;
12 and wherein said checking step comprises checking for said persistent client state
13 object having the identifier therein returned by said client, prior to said responding
14 step.
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1 3. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the persistent client state object is
2 a cookie.

1 4. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the persistent client state object
2 expires after a pre-determined period of time.

1 5. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said storing step comprises adding

an identity of said client to a table associated with said web server; and wherein said checking step comprises checking for said client identity in said table, prior to said responding step.

6. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said table includes an expiry time associated with a respective client identity in said table.

7. A method of verifying a right to use an element of a web page hosted by a web server, the method comprising the steps of:

responsive to a request from a client for an element of a web page, checking said request for an indicator that said request results from a client request for a web page hosted by an authorised web server; and

responsive to the presence of such an indicator, responding to the request from the client with said element of a web page.

8. A method as claimed in claim 7 wherein said indicator comprises a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for said web page, and said checking step comprises checking that said web page URL is from an authorised web server.

9. A method as claimed in claim 7 wherein said indicator comprises a meta-tag incorporated in web pages from authorised servers, and said checking step comprises checking that said meta-tag is from an authorised web server.

10. A method as claimed in claim 9 wherein said meta-tag is a PICS compliant tag.

1 11. A method as claimed in claim 7 operable in one of: said web server or a
2 proxy server connecting said web client to said web server.

1 12. A method as claimed in claim 1 or 7 wherein if said checking step fails to
2 detect said indicator, said responding step comprises returning a message for
3 display at the client to the client.

1 13. A method as claimed in claim 1 or 7 wherein if said checking step fails to
2 detect said indicator, said responding step comprises returning a substitute
3 element to the client.

1 14. A method as claimed in claim 1 or 7 wherein if said checking step fails to
2 detect said indicator, said responding step comprises returning no response to the
3 client.

1 15. In a web client, a method of verifying a right to use an element of a web
2 page hosted by a web server, the method comprising the steps of:

3 responsive to encountering a request for an element of a web page, checking that
4 said request results from a client request for a web page hosted by an authorised
5 web server; and

6 responsive to such a request, requesting said web page element from a server
7 hosting said web page element.

1 16. A computer program product for verifying a right to use an element of a
2 web page, the computer program product comprising:

a computer-readable storage medium having a substrate; and

program data encoded in the substrate of the computer-readable storage medium, wherein the program data comprises means for performing the steps of claim 1, claim 7 or claim 15.

17. A computer program comprising computer program code means adapted to perform all the steps of any one of claims 1 to 15 when said program is run on a computer.

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